

March 16, 2017

The Honorable John Barker
Chairman
Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

The Honorable Louis Ruiz
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Barker and Ranking Minority Member Ruiz,

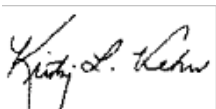
I am writing to support HB 2276 which would protect the public and enhance animal welfare by assuring that only certain entities may possess nonhuman primates and wolves. The bill recognizes the value of AZA accreditation while also establishing important criteria for persons who already own dangerous animals including maintaining veterinary records, adhering to state husbandry and care standards, and registering annually with the local animal control authority.

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is the independent accrediting organization for the premier zoos and aquariums in America and the world including seven institutions in Kansas: Hutchinson Zoo, Lee Richardson Zoo, Rolling Hills Zoo, Sedgwick County Zoo, Sunset Zoological Park, The David Traylor Zoo of Emporia, and Topeka Zoo. AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums adhere to rigorous accreditation standards including for animal welfare, safety, conservation, education, and finances. A copy of AZA's accreditation standards may be found at <https://www.aza.org/assets/2332/aza-accreditation-standards.pdf>.

The AZA believes that nothing is more important than assuring the highest standards of animal welfare and safety. AZA accreditation is a publicly recognized badge signifying excellence in, and commitment to, veterinary care, ethics, physical facilities, staffing, conservation, education, safety and security, and in particular, animal management and welfare. The AZA-accredited institutions in Kansas are making an important difference in the conservation of the world's great species and in inspiring the people of Kansas to play a part in preserving wildlife.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kristin L. Vehrs
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable John Wilson

AZA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of accredited zoos and aquariums in the areas of animal care and husbandry, conservation, education, science and recreation. AZA's 232 accredited zoos and aquariums annually see more than 186 million visitors, collectively generate more than \$17 billion in annual economic activity, and support more than 166,000 jobs. Over the last five years, AZA-accredited institutions supported more than 3,000 field conservation and research projects with \$160,000,000 annually in more than 100 countries.